

SPEECH PRESENTED BY THE HONOURABLE FEDERAL COMMISSIONER NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES, MIGRANTS AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (NCFRMI) ON THE 2019 NATIONAL MIGRATION DIALOGUE WITH THE THEME: 'LOCALIZING THE GLOBAL COMPACT FOR SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR MIGRATION (GCM): TOWARDS SETTING UP NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GCM" HELD ON DECEMBER 17, 2019 AT STATE HOUSE BANQUET HALL , ABUJA

PROTOCOL

Good morning!

It is my great privilege and honor to welcome you all to the 2019 National Migration Dialogue to mark the Celebration of the UN Declared and annually celebrated, International Migrants Day.

This year, we chose the theme, "Localising the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration to Develop a National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Global Compact on Migration," as we seek local opinions on how best to manage the Nigerian migration dynamics for the benefit of all, within the framework of the recently adopted GCM.

I am particularly happy to welcome to this event the Special Guest of Honor, the Honourable Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, Hajiya Sadiya Umar Farouq who has been extremely supportive.

We must recall that Nigeria was a key actor in the various processes that led to the adoption of the GCM. In October 2017 we convened a national consultation that led to the development of Nigeria's position and contribution to the Global Compact. Amongst other consultative meetings and strategy sessions, we followed the

African regional consultations in Addis Ababa; the thematic consultations in Geneva, Vienna, New York; the stocktaking in Mexico; the intergovernmental negotiations in New York; and finally the adoption in Marrakesh, Morocco led by our dear President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR.

For Nigeria, being committed to the issues of Migration is an understatement. We are more committed than ever and this is exemplified by our collective presence here today.

Through Nigeria's involvement in the UN Global Compact, we have shown the highest level of political Will. Interestingly, just last week the President announced that all persons traveling to Nigeria from other African countries will have the ability to apply for visas on arrival and be admitted into the country, unlike ever before. This is because SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR MIGRATION through the GCM is our goal.

After my appointment in September by His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari as the Honorable Federal Commissioner, it has become clear to **us** how vital the role Nigeria plays within the ecosystem of migration: That is, within Africa, internationally and economically as the "GIANT OF AFRICA."

Recognizing the Giant that we are, the Commission has strived to collaborate with various sectors to strengthen economic stability and plan interventions that advocate for a renewed hope in Nigeria. We have realized that our problem is not with migration to foreign countries but with ourselves not taking the lead to sell the richness of every region of our country as a first priority. We are rich in oil, in agriculture, and most importantly, we are blessed with an extremely skilled workforce of young professionals.

Each year we lose our young professionals through both irregular and regular Migration to other countries where life has been sold as more prosperous than home. Ironically, several migrants upon exiting Nigeria had never stepped into their States of international departure before traveling to their destinations abroad.

So, we should ask ourselves, how do we expect to curb poverty and improve living standards without first exposing vulnerable populations to our local opportunities?

The Commission will spend most of 2020 developing messaging that addresses and directs citizens to the various opportunities they can take advantage of in Nigeria.

We hope to work with others to promote more Migration to the continent for the growth of our local economy. We will continue to advocate for joint bilateral agreements with all of foreign governments for the promotion of more regular migration. This improved awareness will hopefully reduce the risks being taken by Nigerian men, women and children currently crossing the Sahara Desert and Mediterranean Sea.

The Commission is also collaborating with the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs to reduce irregular migration and human trafficking. We hope to also address the protracted displacement of Bakkasi Returnees and Migrants from the North East who have migrated to the region.

As the coordinating agency for migration governance in Nigeria, it is our hope that this dialogue will create the discourse that promotes a new Nigeria by looking inward. We also hope our inter-government, and bilateral partnerships can promote more regular migration as very clearly stated in the Global Compact on Migration.

The GCM HAS NO VALUE IF IT DOES NOT CHANGE THE LIFE OF MIGRANTS! That is why what we are doing today is very important.

Today, in the break out sessions I urge all partners to focus on Nigerian priorities using global realities and make recommendations that feed into the action plan for national and improved management of its implementation. I also hope that we can depart from the usual approach of conferences and look towards a coordinated and result-oriented engagement.

I will personally like to recognize the support of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Free Movement Mobility project of ECOWAS.

Let me equally, appreciate the support and long standing friendship of the government of Switzerland. Mr. Ambassador, thank you very very kindly.

And to all, Welcome, once again.

BASHEER GARBA MOHAMMED
Honourable Federal Commissioner